

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ROME 04932 251426Z

ACTION COME-00

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 EB-08 TRSE-00 DODE-00 PRS-01

PA-01 USIA-06 /029 W

-----251507Z 102522 /46

P 251250Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3575

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BEXP, ETEL, IT

SUBJ: VISIT OF ITALIAN MINISTER OF POSTS AND TELECOMMUNICA-
TIONS, VITTORINO COLOMBO

FOR SECRETARY KREPS

REF: ROME 2983 AND ROME 3415

1. MY ATTENTION HAS BEEN CALLED TO AN OPPORTUNITY UNFOLDING HERE WHICH I AM CONVINCED MERITS TOP-LEVEL ATTENTION. I AM THEREFORE TAKING THE LIBERTY OF ADDRESSING YOU PERSONALLY.

2. FOR SOME YEARS, THE MINISTRY OF POSTS AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS HAS BEEN MORE OR LESS "LOCKED" INTO TECHNOLOGY SUPPLIED OR LICENSED BY GERMAN SIEMENS AND DUTCH PHILIPS FOR IMPORTANT SECTORS OF ITS TELECOMMUNICATIONS NEEDS. WITH EMBASSY AND DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE ASSISTANCE, THIS TIE WAS BROKEN WITH THE AWARD OF A CONTRACT IN APRIL, 1976 TO AMERICAN SOURCING FOR A NEW MESSAGE SWITCHING CENTER FOR ROME. (THE FACT THAT ROCKWELL-COLLINS HAPPENED TO BE THE COMPANY INVOLVED IS INCIDENTAL; WE WOULD HAVE DONE THE SAME FOR ANY AMERICAN COMPANY WHERE U.S. SOURCING WAS PREDOMINANT).

3. AS A FOLLOW UP TO THIS AWARD, THE EMBASSY HAS BEEN WORKING

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PAGE 02 ROME 04932 251426Z

WITH MINISTRY OFFICIALS TO EXPAND UPON THIS INITIATIVE, WITH THE RESULT THAT MINISTER COLOMBO HAS BECOME INTERESTED IN VISITING THE UNITED STATES, NOT ONLY TO INSPECT THE PROGRESS OF ROCKWELL-COLLINS ON THEIR INITIAL CONTRACT, BUT TO VISIT WITH U.S. OFFICIALS IN WASHINGTON FOR DISCUSSIONS ON THE STATE-OF-THE-ART, AS WELL AS POSSIBLE COLLABORATION BETWEEN U.S. AND ITALIAN COMPANIES - ESPECIALLY IN THIRD WORLD MARKETS.

4. THE PROSPECTIVE VISIT HAS ALREADY PAID DIVIDENDS IN THAT MINISTRY OFFICIALS HAVE RECENTLY GIVEN INDICATIONS OF CONSIDERING ADDITIONAL U.S. SOURCING FOR THEIR ELECTRONIC MESSAGE SWITCHING PROJECT, DEPENDING ON IMPRESSIONS GAINED DURING THEIR TOUR. THE INITIAL AWARD REFERRED TO ABOVE AMOUNTED TO \$13 MILLION; THE ITALIANS PLAN TO SPEND ABOUT \$200 MILLION IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS FOR MODERNIZING THEIR MESSAGE SWITCHING CENTERS THROUGHOUT ITALY. THUS, THE POTENTIAL REWARDS FOR VIP TREATMENT ARE SELF-EVIDENT.

5. POSSIBLY, EVEN MORE IMPORTANT IS A GROWING INTEREST ON THE PART OF THE MINISTRY, PARTICULARLY MINISTER COLOMBO, TO EXPLORE COLLABORATION WITH U.S. COMPANIES IN THIRD MARKETS. THIS IS BY NO MEANS A CASE OF THE ITALIANS COMING TO US WITH HAT IN HAND. AS MANY AMERICAN FIRMS CAN ATTEST, THE ITALIANS HAVE HIGHLY SOPHISTICATED COMPETITIVE TECHNOLOGY IN SEVERAL SECTORS OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS; THERE ARE AREAS WHERE U.S. AND ITALIAN TECHNOLOGY CAN BE COMPLEMENTARY. IN ADDITION, ITALIAN FIRMS HAVE ESTABLISHED IN ROADS IN AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST WHERE MANY AMERICAN FIRMS ARE RELATIVELY NEW.

6. THERE IS ANOTHER IMPORTANT ASPECT TO THE PROPOSED VISIT. MINISTER COLOMBO AND HIS STAFF WILL SOON BE DRAFTING LEGISLATION AFFECTING THE OPERATION OF PRIVATE RADIO AND TV STATIONS IN ITALY. THIS COULD HAVE A DIRECT IMPACT ON THE CONDITIONS FOR CONTINUED OPERATION OF RADIO AND TELEVISION FACILITIES LOCATED ON U.S. MILITARY INSTALLATIONS IN ITALY.

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PAGE 03 ROME 04932 251426Z

7. ACCORDINGLY, I HOPE THAT YOU WILL SEE FIT TO ISSUE AN INVITATION TO MINISTER COLOMBO TO VISIT THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE FOR PURPOSES OF EXCHANGING VIEWS AND EXPLORING OPPORTUNITIES IN THE FIELD OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS. AN INVITATION OF AN OFFICIAL NATURE IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE THE MINISTER IS SAID TO FEEL, QUITE JUSTIFIABLY, THAT AN INVITATION FROM ONE OR MORE PRIVATE COMPANIES WOULD NOT BE APPROPRIATE. IN ADDITION, WHILE I CAN WELL IMAGINE THE MANY DEMANDS ON YOUR TIME, I WOULD THINK THAT A HALF-HOUR COURTESY CALL WOULD GO FAR TO ADVANCE THE CAUSE OF THIS VISIT. THERE WOULD BE NO COST TO THE U.S. GOVERNMENT SINCE THE MINISTER IS PREPARED TO MAKE ALL TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS. THUS, TO CAPITALIZE ON THIS OPPORTUNITY WE NEED ONLY TO PROVIDE AN INVITATION, ARRANGE A ONE-DAY PROGRAM IN WASHINGTON (TENTATIVELY PLANNED FOR APRIL 12), WHICH SHOULD INCLUDE A CALL AT THE STATE DEPARTMENT, AND FACILITATIVE ASSISTANCE WITH BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS.

8. I WILL APPRECIATE WHATEVER YOU CAN DO TO BRING THIS VISIT TO FRUITION. GARDNER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TELECOMMUNICATION, MINISTERIAL VISITS, CONTRACTS, BUSINESS FIRMS, PROGRAMS (PROJECTS)
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 25-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977ROME04932
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770103-0109
Format: TEL
From: ROME
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770321/aaaaasbz.tel
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Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
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Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 11-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
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Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
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TAGS: BEXP, ETEL, IT, US, (COLOMBO, VITTORINO)
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